

## **It's Okay by UnintendedTrustfall**

**Category:** Stranger Things (TV 2016)

**Genre:** Angst, Emotional Hurt/Comfort, F/M, Hurt/Comfort, Post-Season/Series 02, concussion

**Language:** English

**Characters:** Nancy Wheeler, Steve Harrington

**Status:** Completed

**Published:** 2017-11-21

**Updated:** 2017-11-21

**Packaged:** 2022-04-03 04:55:09

**Rating:** Not Rated

**Warnings:** No Archive Warnings Apply

**Chapters:** 1

**Words:** 2,060

**Publisher:** archiveofourown.org

**Summary:**

Steve Harrington isn't sure what's worse, a bad concussion or a broken heart. But right now he's got both. Nancy talks to him.

Set after they close the gate in 2x09.

## It's Okay

The drive back to the Byers' house was mainly fueled by adrenaline. It wasn't until they were pulling up just onto the street that Steve realized how nauseous he was. He clenched his jaw, tightened his grip on the steering wheel to steady himself. But his head hurt, and his vision was tunneling, and he knew damn well he was about to throw up.

So he did.

He pulled halfway against the curb, put the car in park, threw open the driver's side door and threw up.

The kids all exclaimed various profanities, pointing at Steve who was only barely still in the car as he tried to spit out a long string of bile and saliva. He wiped his mouth on the back of his hand and spit again, trying to wash out the taste. He stayed hunched over, hands on his knees, feeling the outdoor air on his face as he tried to regain his bearings.

"Hock a loogie and let's go, Steve!" Dustin said.

Steve clutched the steering wheel harder, looking up he realized he couldn't see straight.

"Just gimme a minute..."

"We're almost there! We're like half a mile away!" Mike said.

Steve blinked but he couldn't. He's too dizzy and the moving car would only make him more nauseous.

"I can't. I'm... I'm too dizzy."

He could hear Max shifting in the back seat. She said, "I'll drive--"

Steve shot upward, desperately clutching the wheel for stability, "NO!! ...No, okay, shitheads? Now, listen up," Steve turned back, giving them the most authoritative glare he could muster, "We are *walking*. We will come back for the car when I can goddamn see

straight. But right now? We're walking to the Byers' house, are we clear?"

The kids mumbled irritably in the back and Steve managed to sit up a little straighter and repeated, "Are we *clear*?!"

-x-

It wasn't a far walk. Mike was right, they were only half a mile away. But a walk was a walk and Steve's injuries became more apparent to him the further they went.

He was walking with a kind of a limp with one arm wrapped around his bruised, kicked to shit ribcage. He didn't say much during most of the walk and Lucas eyed him the whole time nervously.

"Steve, are you okay?" he said, not taking his eyes off him.

Steve didn't react for a moment and then his own name seemed to register.

"What?"

Lucas exchanged an even more nervous glance with Max.

"I said, are you okay?"

Steve looked over and then shrugged, keeping up the most efficient limp he could manage.

"Peachy. Now, let's keep moving, shitheads."

-x-

The door to the Byers' house opened and the kids ran in to greet Will who looked just as bad as the last time the Upside Down had got him. But he smiled at them and listened while they told him how they'd broken him out this time.

Nancy had run up and hugged her brother who tried to escape it but gave in, smiled and hugged her back. She looked over at them as they reunited with Will, smiling and then she turned, her eyes landing on

Steve and that smile faded.

"Oh my god, Steve..."

He gave a little start, hearing his name said in that way again. He'd been standing in the background, leaning against the fridge, watching the kids' happy reunion and hadn't noticed her separate from Jonathan and Ms. Byers and Hopper.

She came to him, and he wanted to remain strong. He wanted to keep up what he'd said that it was fine-- that *he* was fine. But the caring, gentle look in her eyes and the caring, gentle touch as she examined his bruised and bloodied face made him weak.

"Nancy..." he mumbled as she fretted, pulling him to a chair to sit down, "I'm okay... it's okay."

She ignored him and she went to the sink to wet a kitchen towel and to the freezer to grab some frozen peas.

She returned to him and handed him the peas which he placed gingerly on the back of his head as she began to wipe away the dried blood that covered his face.

"What happened?" She asked quietly and it hurt for her to talk to him so gently, and for her to care.

Because he knew it wouldn't mean anything. That it was temporary. That she might have loved him once but she was in love with Jonathan now. And that he'd have to accept that if that was what made her happy.

"He got his ass kicked, that's what happened!" Dustin offered, smiling, overhearing, apparently.

Unfortunately he then alerted the rest of the room. Meaning, Ms. Byers, Jonathan, and Hopper.

Ms. Byers was on him in a second. She had his face in her hands and without taking her eyes off his bruised face she called,

"Hop!"

He came too and he made Steve track his finger with his eyes and examined him, finally catching sight of Steve's arm wrapped around his torso he pulled up his shirt and saw the collection of dark bruises forming there.

"He should get checked out. I think he has a concussion and maybe some broken ribs."

And with that he was ushered out of the house, and looking back, he saw Nancy watching him go.

---

The doctor had told him it was definitely a concussion and he couldn't watch TV for at least a week and sports were out of the question.

The first two days were awful. His head hurt. His face hurt. His body hurt. He slept for as much of it as he could but either the pain kept him up or the oversleeping would and he'd just sit there in bed, trying to scrub the emptiness from his mind.

He felt very alone.

His parents were who knows where for the next week or so, and his old asshole friends didn't talk to him anymore. Not that he'd want them to.

The kids were great-- which shocked the shit out of him as he'd never babysat before in his life-- but they had school. And they were, well, kids.

They visited him the day after the Gate closed but now it was Monday, and they were at school.

His doorbell rang around 2:45 PM. That definitely wasn't the kids.

He stumbled dazedly out of his room where he'd isolated himself the past 48 hours. He couldn't even feel bothered to fix his hair that stuck up in all directions before he answered the door. He just needed socialization.

He opened the door and his heart skipped.

"Nancy?"

She bit her lip and said, "Is this a bad time?"

He hesitated and then said, "Wh- No! No, it's not... I'm just... doing... I'm doing nothing, actually."

She smiled and followed him inside.

"How're you feeling?"

He shrugged, smiling awkwardly.

"I'm fine... y'know... concussed but... I'm fine, really, Nance, you didn't need to come over..."

She opened her mouth to respond and closed it. Then she said,

"You look tired."

He smirked and said, "I shouldn't. I've been sleeping for the past 2 days."

"Are you sure you're feeling okay?"

He gave her a wide, bewildered smile, "I... I don't know what you want me to say, Nancy."

He sat down on the edge of his kitchen counter, crossing his arms at her. He didn't know why he felt so awkward around her. That was a lie. He knew exactly why. But she deserved to be happy. And if Jonathan made her happier than he would, then Steve decided he'd have to deal.

But why the hell did she want to torment him with it?

"Are you eating?"

He watched her surveying his kitchen like she was investigating a crime scene. What the fuck was she looking for? What was with the interrogation?

"I wasn't... y'know, *concussion*, so... I don't know, I wasn't really

hungry."

She stared him dead in the face.

"It's been two days, Steve."

He shifted uncomfortably.

"What do you want from me, Nance? I don't feel good."

She sighed, looking down at her feet. Then she let herself into the fridge and started making some eggs. He wanted to ask her what the hell she was doing but he already knew her well enough to know she was making them for him.

"Nance..."

"What've you been doing here by yourself?" She asked without looking up from the pan.

He felt like his tongue was stuck to the roof of his mouth. He pried it off swallowed. He said,

"The kids came by on Sunday. Little shits are a handful but... y'know, they're good company."

She didn't say anything and now Steve was getting hurt. Why did she come over here anyway? Was it just to rub it in his face that she didn't want him anymore, if she ever did? Was it just to remind him that in a year he went from popular kid on the basketball team to friendless, concussed weirdo who hangs out with middle schoolers and fights monsters with a bat? What was her endgame? What did she want out of--

"I'm worried about you."

Oh.

Steve felt himself shrink, but he tried to fight it. Tried to sit up straighter and brushed his hair back out of his eyes, "Why?"

A year ago, he would've said, *why, because you're with Jonathan now*

*and you feel guilty that I'm here all alone because I gave up everything for you?*

But he didn't believe that anymore. If he ever had. He didn't know what he believed.

"I think we ended this the wrong way," she said, handing him the plate of eggs. He picked at them idly. "I think we should talk about it."

"What's there to talk about?" He asked, actually eating them now, "You're with Jonathan now. I'm happy for you, really. If you're happier with him than you were with me then I don't want to come between that."

"I'm not with Jonathan. We just... we're interested in each other."

Steve felt his face get hot. He set the empty plate down next to him and said, "Okay... well, then... I don't want to come between *that*."

"Will you just talk to me?!" She burst out, finally turning to face him.

He leapt down off the counter to face her.

"About what?!"

"About us!"

"...what are you talking about?! Nance, I'm trying to be cool about this... and... and understanding and supportive, even! Even when I don't want to! Even when, the thought of never holding you again and never kissing you again and never *being* with you again tears me apart! I just want you to be happy and right now, I'm not! I'll admit that but I'll be fine, I'll move on, just stop... stop rubbing it in."

She had tears in her eyes now. But why's he sorry? For once, he's trying and it seems like she's just here to hurt him. And he doesn't even want to know why, he just wants it to stop. He's in enough pain without a broken heart too.

"I'm not..." she starts and her voice is hollow and it sounds like she might cry, "I'm not rubbing it in. I just... I don't want you to think



that I didn't love you. That I don't still love you... I do."

And he's falling apart and he wants to believe that there's not about to be a 'but', but he knows her too well.

"But," there it is, "I don't think we can be together." And there it is, and he's broken.

And he has tears in his eyes and he tries to force them back and he says, his voice is as hollow as hers was, he's just as close to crying as she was.

"It's okay."

She looks up at him and she pulls his face towards hers and she kisses him. And it's brief but it's real and then she pulls away. And she hugs him. And they stay that way for a long time.

And when they finally break apart, he brushes her hair back behind her ear, like he's done a thousand times before and maybe this is the last time he'll ever do it. And he says,

"It's okay, Nancy. I'm okay."